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- at least one manually engageable moving operator element configured to control the positioning unit:

wherein a sensor unit is provided to determine the position of the operator element and to produce a signal to control the positioning unit so as to control the direction of soil compaction device travel and steer the soil compaction device in response to manipulation of the operator element.

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Please add the following claims:

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10. The soil compaction device of Claim 1, further including a pair of dampening elements to correspondingly dampen oscillation of the operator elements:

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11. The soil compaction device of Claim 10, wherein the operator elements are supported by a guide handle coupled to the positioning unit, and wherein the dampening elements are disposed intermediate the operator elements and the guide handle.

12. The soil compaction device of Claim 11, wherein the dampening elements comprise rubber collars.

13. A soil compaction device comprising:

- a soil contact plate having a guide handle;
- a positioning unit;
- an oscillator that acts on the soil contact plate, has at least two eccentric masses that rotate in opposite directions whose phase relationship can be adjusted relative to one another using the positioning unit in order to control the direction of soil compaction device travel and to steer the soil compaction device; and
- an operator element that is mounted on the guide handle and that is configured to generate command signals upon manual engagement thereof for steering the soil compaction device and for controlling the direction of compaction device travel;
- a sensor unit located remote from the operator element, wherein the sensor unit determines the position of the operator element and produces a corresponding signal to

control the positioning unit in order to steer the soil compaction device and to control the direction of soil compaction device travel.

14. A soil compaction device according to claim 13, wherein the operator element comprises two independently movable control handles.

15. A soil compaction device according to claim 13, wherein each sensor unit has at least one capacitive, inductive or resistive sensor.

16. A soil compaction device according to claim 13, wherein each sensor unit has at least one Hall sensor or a reed contact as well as a transmitting element attached to the corresponding operator element.

17. A soil compaction device according to claim 13, wherein the positioning unit has a fluid-activated piston/cylinder unit as well as an electromechanical valve controlled by the signal from the sensor unit to control a fluid stream at the piston/cylinder unit

18. A soil compaction device according to claim 13, wherein the two operator elements move independent of one another and through which the phase relationship of a group of rotating eccentric masses can be changed.

#### REMARKS

Claims 10-18 have been added. Entry of these claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Waschulewski*, U.S. Patent No. 4,440,034 in view of *Crum et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,276,230. Further, claims 1-5, 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Stoecker*, U.S. Patent No. 3,832,080 in view of *Ishibashi et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,448,768. Next, claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Stoecker* in view of *Ishibashi et al.* as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of *Artzberger*, U.S. Patent No. 4,779,418. And, Claims 1-6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.